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Annotation #5  
Film Title: The Corporation  
Word Count: 836

**Title, director and release year?**

*The Corporation* is a 2003 documentary film directed by Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott.

**What is the central argument or narrative of the film?**

This documentary comprehensively covers the contemporary corporation. The narrative of the film follows the development of the corporation, from its government-chartered, public functions-assisting origin to the “legal person” whose highest priority is to make a profit that it is today. The film also demonstrates the negative impacts of big corporations via multiple angles of attack and explains why we should oppose to them. Finally, the film offers a few advice on doing so and encourages the audience with some successful stories of the people exercising their power.

**How is the argument or narrative made and sustained? How much scientific information is provided, for example? Does the film have emotional appeal?**

The film supports the argument by showing interviews of many different people. The range of interviewees spans inside and out of the industry, to show different aspects of its impacts. Due to the comprehensiveness of supporting evidence, the film appears to be fairly unbiased and reflective of the reality. Scientific information was used in multiple instances, including the proof of sweatshops owned by a few American corporations. As objective as it is, there is a considerable amount of footage attempting to emotionally appeal to the audience. For example, birth defects of animals and humans are shown to prove the negative impacts of corporations’ externalizing strategy.

**What sustainability problems does the film draw out? (Political, Legal, Economic, Technological, Media and informational, Organizational, Educational, Behavioral, Cultural, Ecological?)**

Historically, corporations were created to increase productivity, more specifically, to produce more of everything per hour. This principle of corporation is mutually supportive of the foundation of capitalism. In order to make the most money per hour in a capitalist society, profit must be the only motivation. Thus, finding loopholes in the legal system to externalize production cost became the norm, and the surrounding communities and environment take a toll. The supreme court ruling, which granted the corporations many human rights without morality, from long ago was another major shortcoming from the legal aspect. In this film, the news and media industry gets its own fair share of exposure in terms of its control by corporations, as well as the government losing control to corporations.

**What parts of the film did you find most persuasive and compelling? Why?**

The comprehensiveness of the coverage in this film is one of the most compelling aspects. It represents a certain degree of accuracy and gives many thought-provoking insights. For example, the film points out people’s innate laziness to assume the problems relating to the

corporate world are too far to care. Also, the lack of diversity in leadership of the corporate world is a serious problem that many people cannot think of. It is an argument that really makes sense when you come to think of it.

The extensive use of analogies was extremely helpful with getting people to understand the situation. Human's early fascination and attempts at flying are used to explain the working principles on which the corporate world is based. To order to clearly show the corporation is "sick", it was clinically diagnosed as a psychopath since it was earlier established by supreme court as a "legal person".

**What parts of the film were you not compelled or convinced by? Why?**

The solution proposal part of the film was weak. Someone in one of the interview said "having a vision is the most important part". Really? What can people do with a vision? If he argues that it is important for the leaders to have a vision, then the question becomes how to create a vision in the leaders' minds? There are a few other solutions presented here and there in the film, but they are not well-thought-out or systematic.

**What audiences does the film best address? Why?**

The film would address virtually every consumer well. It gives more than enough reasons to convince everyone in the audience not to believe in the corporation and stand on their own feet to put up a collective fight. The film starts with the corporation's historical origin to explain why it was flawed to begin with, and it goes on to show that the corporation is a trap in the names of capitalism and consumerism. Considering the thoroughness, it is hard for anyone to not believe a major part of his or her life is fabricated by the corporation.

**What could have been added to this film to enhance its environmental educational value?**

As mentioned before, the solutions are not really practical. More importantly, almost none are safe strategies individuals can adapt to put in their own share of contribution. Yes, it is incredibly irresponsible for someone who understands the situation to buy an knowingly unsustainable product, but sometimes that product is just that much cheaper. To the majority of the masses, that price difference will dictate their purchasing decisions.

**What kinds of actions and points of intervention are suggested by the film? If the film itself does not suggest corrective action, describe actions that you can imagine being effective.**

On the one hand, someone in the corporation suggested that corporations can be the answer to the sustainability problem. By privatizing everything inch of resources, everything in the world will be protected for its best interests. On the other hand, a violent protest in Bolivia shows how much people suffer from privatization of water. The CEO of the largest carpet manufacturer suggests the leaders to have a green vision. If more of the CEOs have that kind of vision, more corporations will turn around like his did. However, I think it would be much more helpful if the film teaches individuals to economically boycott irresponsible corporations.

**What additional information has the film compelled you to seek out? (Provide at least two supporting references.)**

